

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5994

INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO VIA POUCH

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MX

SUBJECT: ECHEVERRIA COMMENTS ON US BICENTENNIAL, OTHER TOPICS

1. ACCOSTED BY REPORTERS WHEN HE VOTED JULY 4, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA FIELDLED QUESTIONS ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS LITTLE NEW OR STARTLING ON MOST TOPICS, COMMENTS HE DIRECTED "TO THE PEOPLE OF THE US" PROBABLY DO REVEAL HIS PERCEPTION OF THE US AND US POLICY. THE EXCHANGE WENT AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: GEORGE NATANSON, CBS: MR. PRESIDENT, EXCUSE ME, I FORGOT THE QUESTION MOST IMPORTANT FOR ME: TODAY IS THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES, RIGHT? WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE? ECHEVERRIA: THAT THE UNITED STATES NEVER FORGET THE FATHERS OF (THAT)INDEPENDENCE; THAT THEY ALWAYS BE FAITHFUL TO (THE FOUNDING FATHERS') SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, TO THE GREAT HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION AND AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE...THAT THE HUGE BUSINESS INTERESTS (GRANDES NEGOCIOS) OF THE TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES NOT MAKE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FORGET THE FATHERS OF US INDEPENDENCE.

NATANSON: WOULD YOU SAY THAT, PERHAPS, WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THOSE REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES?

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ECHEVERRIA: OF COURSE* YOU HAVE SOUGHT MORE BUSINESS THAN

YOU HAVE SOUGHT FRIENDS. DON'T EDIT THIS OUT. WE NEED A WORLD OF COOPERATION THAT AVOIDS WAR; THAT THE US AND THE USSR MAKE FEWER ATOMIC BOMBS BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING TO LEAD EVENTUALLY TO A TERRIBLE WAR AND THEY ARE GOING TO SINK THE WORLD. MAKE SURE THAT WHAT I AM SAYING GETS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. DON'T EDIT ME OUT. IS THERE LIBERTY IN THE UNITED STATES?

NATANSON: YES, THERE IS.

ECHEVERRIA: MAKE SURE THIS IS HEARD. I'M GOING TO WITHHOLD JUDGEMENT(ON WHETHER THERE IS LIBERTY IN US OR NOT). WE HOPE THAT THERE IS LIBERTY IN THE US TO TRANSMIT THESE WORDS OF THE PRESIDENT OF MEXICO; THAT YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS AND LESS BUSINESS; THAT YOU BELIEVE IN CERDS; THAT YOU GO NOT TOWARDS WAR, BUT TOWARD PEACE; THAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO CONSTRUCTING A MORE DEMOCRATIC WORLD; THAT YOUR BUSINESS INTERESTS NOT DESTROY THE DEMOCRATIC LIFE BOTH WITHIN THE US AND INTERNATIONALLY; DON'T YOU ALL CUT ME OUT. IF THERE IS LIBERTY IN THE US, YOU WON'T EDIT IT OUT, EH?
END QUOTE.

2. EARLIER IN THE CONVERSATION THE PRESIDENT TOOK ANOTHER QUESTION ON THE STATE OF US-MEXICAN RELATIONS AND IN A CONVENTIONAL REPLY LABELED THEM "VERY GOOD, MUCH BETTER THAN BEFORE".

3. THE PRESIDENT ALSO COMMENTED ON HIS CHANCES FOR THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL JOB, SAYING HE THOUGHT HE HIMSELF HAD LITTLE HOPE, BUT THAT THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO HAVE A SECRETARY GENERAL FROM THE THIRD WORLD.

4. ON HIS INTENTIONS AFTER HE LEAVES THE PRESIDENCY DECEMBER 1, HE REITERATED PREVIOUS ASSERTIONS THAT HE WILL READ AND STUDY, REST, AND DEVOTE HIMSELF TO THE CENTER FOR THIRD WORLD ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES. HE CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT HE WILL HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH INTERNAL POLITICS AND LABELED "TOTALLY FALSE" A RUMOR THAT HE HAD PURCHASED A CHAIN OF NEWSPAPERS (SE MEXICO 6463).

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